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Popular Advertising Advice for Fashion Entrepreneurs: A Summative Content Analysis

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Reaching the target market through thoughtful ways is an important aspect of any business (Choong, 2008). Further, for fashion brands and retailers, the competition continues to grow as e-commerce, particularly, enables companies to enter the market relatively easily thereby likely affecting the product life cycle. Effective advertising strategies can help insure top performance, company growth, and an increase in customer loyalty (Moore & Fairhurst, 2003). There has been an increase of advertising channels available for entrepreneurs and companies to utilize in the past decade (Watson, Worm, Palmatier, & Ganesan, 2015) with the growing opportunities on the internet and big data mining.

Wisdom concerning best target marketing practices is available in many places. Marketing textbooks and academic research, by definition, highlight case studies and empirical findings. Another option, on that could be noted as a popular and somewhat easy option, is to simply conduct an internet search. Several different key words can be used in a search to access hundreds or thousands of web pages that contain personal, professional, or even popular target marketing advice. A more traditional approach to researching target market advice would be to visit local bookstores, find their business section, and read the popular marketing and advertising books. These books are written by people knowledgeable about the industry and are targeted to businesses seeking to find the best ways to market products. The challenge is taking the time to read through these resources to find the best advice to fit the entrepreneur's target marketing plan.

The purpose of this study was to determine the most popular fashion advertising channel for reaching target markets. The study consisted of three objectives: (1) to summarize advice available in online articles via a simple Google search, (2) to summarize advice via popular press books about target advertising, and (3) to summarize academic advice targeted to undergraduate and graduate students.

Method

A three-pronged summative content analysis of internet resources, popular press books, and academic textbooks was used to address the objectives. This method allows for interpretation of the words and their context. First, the top selling marketing and promotions textbooks, per Amazon.com, were investigated. Next, an assessment of books offered in the "business" section was made at three popular book stores: Barnes and Noble, Half Price Books, and Amazon.com. Third, to determine internet advice, a simple Google search was conducted. Every link on the first three pages of the search was followed. In each of the three data collection locations, time spent on the methodology was limited to four hours. In the context of this study, the advice points were recorded on an Excel table and then a frequency analysis

was employed. Specifically, advice was noted on the data collection form, alphabetized, and assigned numerical codes.

Findings

In total, 194 different advice points were collected from the searches conducted via Google articles, popular press books, and marketing textbooks. The ten frequently mentioned advertising advice points from the three areas of data collection were social media, websites, blogs, email advertising, influencers, videos, mobile applications, TV ads, search engine optimization, and Facebook page (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Target Advertising Advice

Google Search Results. The three most frequent pieces of advice given via Google were (1) to use bloggers/influencers who are paid by retailers or brands to showcase product on the bloggers/influencer's personal blog, (2) email advertising, and (3) retailer blogs, where retailers use blogs they maintain to advertise products.

Popular Press Search Results. The three most frequent pieces of advice given via popular press search were (1) to advertise on websites (that is paid advertisements place on webpages), (2) social media advertising, and (3) blog mentions from retailers who create and maintain their own blogs.

Textbook Search Results. The three most frequent pieces of advice given via textbook search were (1) utilization of social media, (2) promotion (when a retailer advertises a sale), and (3) mobile marketing.

Discussion

This research sought to identify the advice a fashion entrepreneur can access when researching effective advertising channels. As a result, these findings can provide a solid starting point to creating an advertising strategy. The targeted advertising advice found to be most popular was not surprising as they are either long standing in popularity or gaining in popularity as technology is becoming more accessible and user-friendly. Social media, email, and websites are advertising channels that are categorized as digital marketing and are significantly less expensive to utilize than traditional channels and have large distribution capabilities (Wang, Hsu, Huang, & Chen, 2015). Blogs are able to establish relationships through the bloggers posts and consumers and can have an impact on consumer behavior. Wendt, Griesbaum, and Kölle (2016), noted that videos evoke more emotion from a consumer. Their study concluded using video as an advertising avenue is a successful in marketing products and is also successful in building brand awareness. According to a study conducted by Dinh Le and Ho Nguyen (2016), consumers have moderate attitudes towards advertising on mobile devices, but feel they have gained helpful insights to products via the advertisements. TV advertising is a traditional method of marketing. According to a recent study by Roozen and Meulders (2015), TV advertising, along with print advertising (both categorized as traditional media channels), were found to be more effective than advertising on the internet, a non-traditional media channel.

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